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ACTING HON. EDITOR : S. C. HOLLIDAY

Hackney Public Libraries

Council Notes

THE second Council Meeting of the 51st session was held at Chaucer House on 27th March, the President (Mr. J. T. Gillett) in the chair.

Miss E. M. Exley, the former Honorary Secretary, was co-opted to the Council for the current year.

The President moved the Council's sincere appreciation of the work of Mr. W. B. Stevenson, the retiring Hon. Editor, and this was carried with acclamation.

The Press and Publications Committee approved an estimate for printing a new edition of *Sequel stories*, the revision of which is being undertaken by Mr. Frank M. Gardner, F.L.A. The net selling price has been agreed at 10s. 6d. per copy, less 10 per cent. discount to personal and institutional members of the Library Association. Publication is expected towards the end of this year. It was suggested that the work be given a new title, and members are invited to submit suggestions to the Hon. Secretary.

It was reported to the Education and Library Committee that 100 of the 466 applications for ordinary Correspondence Courses had to be refused owing to lack of tutors. The Committee and the Council regret that so many members have been disappointed, and urge suitably qualified members willing to undertake work as tutors in any section of the Syllabus (except Literature) to notify their Divisional Secretary without delay.

The Annual Report, 1945, as printed elsewhere in this issue, was approved by the Council for submission to the Annual General Meeting; and it was agreed to hold the Annual General Meeting at Nottingham.

As final details of the Annual General Meeting are not yet to hand, and owing to the *Assistant* appearing at two-monthly intervals, members are asked to watch *The Library Association Record* for a notice of the date and full programme.

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A.A.L. Correspondence Courses

Correspondence Courses in the sections mentioned below will be arranged to run from April to June of the following year, and from November to December of the following year.

The courses, conducted under the auspices of the A.A.L. (Section of the L.A.), comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading hints and advice on study and practical work, and questions or subjects for essays upon which the tutor will write comments or corrections.

The subjects treated and the respective fees are as set out below :—

Entrance Examination.—The course covers the whole of the L.A. requirements for this examination. Fee, £2 0s. 0d.

Registration Examination.—Group (a) (i) Classification—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. ; (ii) Cataloguing—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. Group (b) (iii) and (iv) Bibliography and Assistance to Readers in the choice of books—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Group (c) (v) Library Organization and Administration—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. ; (vi) History of English Literature—Fee, £1 5s. 0d.

Final Examination.—Part 1, Bibliography and Book Selection—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 2, Library Organization and General Librarianship—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 3, Library Routine and Administration : (a) Public Libraries—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. (b) University and College Libraries—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 4, Literary Criticism and Appreciation : (a) Modern Literature—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 5, Specialist Certificates (c) Advanced Classification—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. ; Advanced Cataloguing—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. (d) Historical Bibliography—Fee, £1 10s. 0d.

Both full courses and short revision courses in Classification and Cataloguing based on the old syllabus, are still available for those members who wish to complete their Intermediate Examination, having already passed one part by December, 1941. Fees for these courses remain at £1 6s. 6d. per subject.

Non-members of the Library Association are charged double fees.

Students wishing to enter for a course must obtain an application form and send it, together with the necessary fee, to Mrs. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Hemm Hill Road, London, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses, respectively, and before 20th February and 20th August for the revision courses. After these dates no application will be considered.

Important.—Before entering for a course, students are particularly advised to make themselves familiar with the regulations governing the examination, as printed in the "Library Association Year Book." Any queries concerning the examinations or the syllabus should be sent direct to the Library Association, and not to the Association Assistant Librarians.

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Counter Poise

Victor Dodd

THE other day I got involved in a conversation with two fellow Servicemen—an amusement-fair proprietor and an insurance salesman. We were talking about "civvy street." The amusement-fair proprietor told us how much his takings rose if he went round his machines now and again and informed his clients, "All these things are faked. You might as well throw your money down the drain." Some such statement as this apparently acted as a kind of stimulant, and the coppers fairly poured into his contraptions. The insurance salesman was rather more subtle in his methods: "Studying the public" was a phrase he used over and over again. Eventually they turned to me. What did I do for a living?

I told them I was an assistant in a large library and there followed a lengthy discussion as to what were the functions of a librarian, and why, anyway, did we bother about libraries when Penguins cost only sixpence apiece, and you could get "all the latest" for twopence a week at the corner-shop? In fact, many of the familiar themes cropped up, and were expressed with a boldness and conviction that took some fairly solid talking to nullify. A glance at Sayers' *Manual* surprised them as much as if I had produced their release cards from behind their ears.

The point is, however, that these men were typical of scores I have met. Although some of them were public-library users, very few had the remotest idea of library work except that the date-stamp was always foremost in their thoughts. Perhaps it does not matter greatly if they remain ignorant. After all, thousands know nothing of the engineering complications behind their telephone system. In this age of specialists it is a natural state of things, and yet this conception of librarianship does underline the importance of the junior assistant. I know it is often the custom to have an experienced assistant either supervising the counter, or somewhere fairly handy, so that more difficult enquiries can be answered satisfactorily, and a check kept on counter discipline; but frequently those experienced assistants have considerable demands on their time for other tasks and the junior is left with a fair amount of responsibility. Our profession must be unique in so far as it must usually be the least experienced members who have the most contact with the public.

Does this matter? No, providing we, as junior assistants, are aware of our responsibilities and tackle the job accordingly. The public do not expect us to be able to answer all their enquiries and complaints, but they do expect us to handle them intelligently and produce the right answers from *somewhere*. But the handling of enquiries is not what I propose to discuss. It is with approach, or attitude, that I am at the moment concerned, for it is upon this that a considerable amount of our relationship with the public depends.

I will not waste much time in debating the importance of public relations. That they are important no one would deny. The librarian's work consists largely in providing a liaison between books and people. Cataloguing and classification aim at interpreting a library to the public and many other aspects of our work ultimately have this object in view, but the lubricant which helps this arrangement to function is that personal contact between staff and reader.

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As local government officers we have, along with Civil Servants (let us not mince our words), inherited a tradition which, in some respects, is not very high. Public libraries have probably played their part along with other departments in creating a tendency to treat the public with a kind of petty, bureaucratic indifference. This tendency should not be exaggerated, but it cannot be entirely ignored, and we must constantly guard against its creeping into the library service.

I am not suggesting that we cultivate the greasiness which in normal times one sometimes encounters in shops. Our job is far removed from this; it demands something infinitely more delicate: politeness without obsequiousness, efficiency without officiousness, and so on.

Pleasantness of manner is not natural to all of us, and yet if by means of it a weekly bonus fell to our pockets, how quickly we should see that our personality was developed in that direction. Our borrower must never be made to feel an intruder, but, on the other hand, we should surely not wish to embarrass him with hearty greetings or superfluous remarks. Nor are we able to employ the technique of the amusement-fair man. Our approach must be almost insignificant, rather quiet and correct and in keeping with the best traditions of librarianship. This positive, even friendly reception of the borrower must eventually reflect itself in the public's conception of our profession. And let us remember, too, that this public (in the shape of committees in the democratic pattern) will play a powerful part in the support they give to the future expansion and development of our work.

If, in a large number of cases, our only personal contact with the borrower is to be when we charge or discharge his book, we should bear in mind that although this is the fiftieth time in a day we have done so, he (because at that moment he may have little else to do) will watch our actions. How efficiently or how lackadaisically we perform the routine will make some impression, even if unconsciously, on his mind.

The library will always find those who will not conform with its mildest regulations and who constantly abuse its service. The library assistant must learn to sort out quickly a genuine complaint from a vague, perhaps unreasonable grumble. For the really bad case we are justified, I believe, in using a frigid, briefly-phrased technique. But for every borrower in this category there are hundreds who are not defaulters, and when a minor infringement of regulations occurs, a snub will obviously do much harm. Often a harassed borrower will use sarcasm; to answer it with sarcasm is the easiest way out, but frequently a statement of fact will do more good. (For example: a few of the *reasons* why a particular book is "always out," etc.)

Inform, then; this is most important. Think of all those bits of information that come our way as library assistants, things which are our job to know, our job to impart. Again, how invaluable to the smooth working of the library are those brief remarks which can at once explain a piece of apparent red-tape or bring reason to a stupid regulation. Alertness in quickly summing up the borrower, asking his name as if he was an individual and not a mere name on the electoral roll; these things are worth our consideration. Obviously we do not want lengthy discussion: certainly we do not want a sermon for every other borrower, but we do want to infuse life into the work we are doing; an interest which can only be reflected when we are working with an interest. Counter-work is what we make it; vital and worthwhile, or the dulllest duty of the day. If the latter is the case then it means something on the debit side of our relationship with the public. We cannot afford that; we cannot afford to ignore these small things which build up or diminish our public relations. This is

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not a subject on which it is possible to dogmatise : it is a personal problem which all assistants in contact with the public must solve.

I shall not dwell long on the miserable causes which promoted this article ; the woman who said she shuddered every time she went into a certain library because of the sharp-tongued assistants, and things which I have seen so often myself when looking round various libraries where my war-time travels have taken me. I remember the look on a borrower's face as he stood whilst two girls with the giggles debated the authorship of a certain novel. But we have all seen enough slipshod counter-work to know just how bad it can look from the other side of the barrier. Peace-time conditions will probably eradicate most of these misfits, but we still have to guard against that negative indifference which sometimes characterizes some of our library counter staffs.

If I have enlarged on the importance of counter-work then I would ask you to remember that public which also enlarges it. It will be a long time before the man-in-the-street realizes that there is more in librarianship than book-stamping. In the meantime, I would say let us aim at the highest levels of counter technique. Let us, as the librarians of the future, attack the job with intelligent interest, sympathy and tact.



A Study in Contrasts *

W. Joan Benns

WHEN I was asked to give a short paper to-day on some aspect of County Library work, I found it somewhat difficult to select my subject. The reason for this is that I sometimes feel that my experience of County Library work as such is rather limited, owing to the fact that the first five years of my professional life were spent under a Municipal Authority, while I have served for less than two years under a County Council. Moreover, my service in the county has consisted entirely of work in a branch library remote from headquarters, and I have, therefore, had little opportunity of observing the organization of a County Library Headquarters, and the administration of the library service throughout the county area as a whole.

I propose, therefore, to deal to-day with the differences in the organization of the County Branch Library as opposed to the Branch Library of a Municipal Authority. Such differences may at first sight appear slight and unimportant, but speaking as one who has had experience of both systems I find them many and various. If such differences can be discovered and examined, perhaps some new ideas will be brought to light, and those of us who have the honour to represent our authorities as Branch Librarians may derive some benefit therefrom.

First, let me take the question of isolation. The County Branch Librarian may be as much as forty miles from his Chief Librarian and headquarters, at any rate in a county as large as the West Riding. As a result, personal visits by his chief are necessarily restricted, particularly in these days of shortage of staff, and the Branch Librarian has to stand on his own feet to a very large extent. He is not only responsible for the organization and management of the branch, but has also to keep a wary eye

* A paper delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Yorkshire Division of the A.A.L., held at Wakefield on 24th January, 1946.

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on the maintenance of the building. If redecoration is required, new furniture is needed, display facilities seem to be inadequate, or any minor repairs crop up, it is up to the Branch Librarian to report the matter, and when the repairs are done see that the work is carried out to his satisfaction.

Let me take another aspect of the matter. In my experience, if the cleaner in a Municipal Branch suddenly decides to take a prolonged holiday from work without any sort of notice, the Branch Librarian picks up the telephone, tells some minor deity at Central all his troubles, and then sits back and waits for a miracle in the shape of a cleaner to appear. Not so the County Branch Librarian. If no one answers the official advertisement for a cleaner, it may be necessary for the Branch Librarian to make personal enquiries with a view to recommendation.

And now let me turn to matters which are more generally associated with the librarian and his work. I suppose that it is generally agreed that bookstock, together with staffing, form the most important feature of library work. I presume that the method of selecting branch library stock varies in different municipalities. In a county system the Branch Librarian has more responsibility with regard to additional books and changes of stock, which he selects periodically from the headquarters' pool, and must make as balanced and attractive as possible. A batch of anything up to 800 books is selected and added to stock three times a year, in addition to monthly batches of recent publications and special requests, and non-fiction books received through the "On demand" service, of which I will speak later. Thus, the stock preserves a degree of freshness which compares very favourably with that of many municipal branches, while the problem of stale stock (possibly neither worn out nor out of date), which is apt to become something of a difficulty in small Municipal Branch Libraries, does not arise.

A good supply of bibliographies and booklists is even more essential in the County Branch Library than it is in a municipal system, where contact with the Central Library can easily be made. In this respect, the Readers' Guides issued by the County Libraries' Section of the Library Association have proved invaluable, and we look forward to new editions of these lists as soon as conditions permit. The recent lists issued in co-operation by the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and West Riding County Libraries have also proved their worth.

One respect in which the County Library provides a first-class service is in the supply of non-fiction books asked for by readers. The County Branch, by virtue of its being a small cog in a very large machine, is able to draw upon the entire non-fiction stock throughout the county area, and by means of the postal service can supply almost any non-fiction book with the minimum of delay. In my view, this method of non-fiction supply can be surpassed by few municipalities, the exceptions being very large or old-established systems.

The same degree of prompt service does not, unfortunately, exist in the case of the supply of fiction. Gaps in the fiction stock are bound to occur, however carefully selected it may be, owing to the obvious restrictions of shelving space. Under the present system, a delay of several months and even a year during the war pressure may exist in the supply of novels specifically asked for by readers. If the librarian does not regard it as part of his job to provide such novels, this is not a serious matter. But if he feels that he should be able to satisfy such demands, some system involving less delay should be devised. Perhaps some scheme similar to that which works so admirably in the case of non-fiction can be organized when staff and stock permit,

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at any rate in the case of the better type of fiction by such modern "classics" as Huxley, Somerset Maugham and Hemingway.

A system of a satisfactory reference library service in a county area has yet to be evolved. An up-to-date quick reference stock is, of course, always available at the County Branch, but it obviously cannot cover all reference queries, and however comprehensive the reference collection at headquarters may be, the fact remains that it may be a considerable distance from the reader's home. The provision of adequate reference stock at the Regional Libraries at strategic points throughout the county may help to solve this difficulty, but even so, the problem of how to bring the book to the reader without weakening the stock for another would-be consultant remains. As against this the "On demand" service does bring many reference books to the reader's actual home. It would appear that, for the present, we must depend upon the telephone and the resources and co-operation of our nearest municipal colleagues.

The County Branch Library has a staffing problem which is quite unknown in most municipal systems. The Branch Librarian may be the only qualified member of the staff, and if the library is to remain open during most of the day, for five or six days a week, an untrained or partly-trained assistant must inevitably be left in charge, sometimes for quite long periods. This may sound something like sacrilege to some Municipal Librarians, but it is difficult to see how it can be avoided. Such a system makes big demands on the junior assistant, who is called upon to shoulder responsibility for which he is as yet unfitted by training and experience. Conversely, the trained personnel have to do a certain amount of routine work in time which can ill be spared from extension work and duties calling for skill and professional ability. Such a system does, however, result in a sense of responsibility and an efficiency in our junior assistants beyond their years and experience. Here, again, the extension of the regional systems may do much to solve this problem.

The junior assistant in a County Branch Library has good facilities for all-round training in lending, quick-reference and children's library work. The necessarily limited reference bookstock does, however, deprive him of the opportunity of becoming familiar with the best and standard works on all subjects. Moreover, owing to the isolated nature of his work, he lacks those professional contacts which mean so much to many of us, and which are of great value in our years of apprenticeship. The resumption of the former system of interchange of junior assistants between different libraries in the system for short periods may help to remedy this defect.

The trained staff, too, suffer from the enforced isolation. The Branch Librarian may see no one with whom he can discuss professional matters for weeks or even months at a time, and it is for this reason that meetings such as this one are such a boon. He can easily become stale or dispirited, for lack of professional contacts to sharpen his wits and help and encourage him in his work. The issue of regular library bulletins to all branch staff, a feature which has necessarily been discontinued in many counties during the war, will do much to overcome this sense of isolation in our scattered libraries.

If what I have said to-day has in some ways painted rather a gloomy picture of work in a County Branch Library, such was not my intention. Much sound and useful work has been done in the past, and we look forward to many further developments in the not too far distant future. None of the work which is done in our County Branches could be accomplished without the backing and assistance of the staff at headquarters, upon whose unflinching goodwill and co-operation the Branch Librarian is, happily, always able to depend.

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Divisional Notes and News

Eastern.—Under the Chairmanship of Miss E. C. Wood, A.L.A., a meeting was held at Ipswich, on 29th November, 1945. It was attended by a representative number of members from the Division's Borough and County Libraries.

An interesting and informative lecture was given by Miss Lilian J. Redstone, M.B.E., B.A., visiting Archivist to the Ipswich Borough Library, entitled "Records in a Library." The hearty appreciation of the meeting was expressed to the speaker in a vote of thanks by Miss K. M. Sharkey, F.L.A.

On 21st March, a meeting was held at Lowestoft, when the members held a Community Brains Trust to consider questions on library matters sent in by Divisional members (including one from an assistant serving in C.M.F.). The Chairman of the Lowestoft Public Libraries Committee welcomed the visiting members, and joined in the Brains Trust. Miss K. M. Sharkey, F.L.A., Acting Borough Librarian of Lowestoft, acted as Chairman and Question-Master.

At the close of the meeting, Miss B. Turner (Ipswich) expressed the thanks of the visitors to the Lowestoft Committee and staff for their hospitality.

Greater London.—The Division paid a most enjoyable visit to the Library of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning on 20th February. The meeting was noteworthy as the Division's first visit to the Library of a Government Department. Members were served an excellent tea by the Librarian, Miss Walker, and her staff, whose hospitality and courtesy in answering members' questions made the meeting a most pleasant occasion.

Miss Walker said the Library was a new one, having been started in 1942. At first it had been intended merely to compile a bibliography of books for use of the staff of the Ministry, but it was soon found impracticable to borrow all the books asked for, and a library was started. Despite its having to be built from nothing and the difficulty of getting books and equipment, the Library now has a stock of over 6,000 books and pamphlets, and was being added to at the rate of about 1,000 a year.

Members displayed great interest in the work of the Library and asked many questions. Mr. Izant thanked Miss Walker on behalf of the meeting for her talk and her hospitality, and congratulated her on a fine Library built up under most difficult circumstances.

The Division cordially invites all members and other library assistants to the Thursday Evening Meetings to be held on the second Thursday of every month (excluding August) at Chaucer House, at 6.30 p.m. Each month a topic will be selected and a speaker invited to open the discussion; after which it is hoped that those present will discuss the subject informally. Two meetings will have been held before this issue appears, and the third meeting, on 13th June, will be on "Mechanization in Libraries." Mr. T. W. Callander, F.L.A., will open the discussion.

Suggestions for subjects and offers to open discussions at subsequent meetings are invited. Members of the Divisional Committee will be present at these informal meetings, and will be pleased to answer questions about the A.A.L. or introduce members to one another.

Future Meeting.—A "Brains Trust" of tutors is to be held on 16th June. Details will be issued to members later.

North-Western.—The Annual Meeting of the Liverpool and District Branch was held on 31st January in the Liverpool Reference Library, where Mr. J. T. Evans,

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Deputy Chief Librarian, welcomed members on behalf of Mr. J. F. Smith, Chief Librarian of Liverpool Public Libraries, to whose hospitality this Branch is very greatly indebted. Light refreshments were served prior to the meeting, which, despite bad weather, was attended by 48 members, including many recently "demobbed" colleagues. Mr. R. Bioletti was again in the Chair, having been re-elected Chairman of the Branch for the current year, and after the reading of the Annual Report for 1945, which proved how well the Branch has weathered the trying war years, he called on members to read the papers and poems contributed for this *Magazine* evening. The high standard of talent revealed in poems, short stories and more serious articles was considerable, and was greatly appreciated by all those present. A vote of thanks to Mr. Smith and Mr. Evans for their hospitality and welcome, and to the contributors to *Magazine* was proposed by Mr. T. E. Headon, of Liverpool, seconded by Miss M. Piggott, of Ormskirk, and was heartily endorsed by all members present.

Wessex.—Mr. B. M. Headicar, F.L.A., Director of the Inter-Allied Book Centre, addressed the January meeting of the Division held at Southampton. He spoke of the destruction to books at home and abroad as the result of the war. 20,000,000 books had been destroyed in this country alone, and over 50,000,000 in Europe.

The salvage drives held here were primarily arranged to obtain paper for pulping, and in the first drive thousands of irreplaceable books were so used. The Library Association and other bodies took up the matter with the Ministry of Supply, and a Committee of Scrutiny was formed. From subsequent book drives 136,000,000 books were received, of which 14,000,000 went to the Forces and nearly 2,000,000 were set aside for war-damaged libraries. To deal with the last number, the Inter-Allied Book Centre was set up under the auspices of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education.

Now, said Mr. Headicar, the Americans were just beginning their book drives, and Australia was also starting: eventually an important field of international co-operation would come into being to ensure the most useful dissemination of this material.

Mr. H. V. Bonny (Southampton) moved a vote of thanks to the speaker, and said that the account heard that afternoon was part of the history of librarianship.

Tea was then taken, and the Division's Annual General Meeting was held in the evening session.

Officers and Committee, 1946:—

Chairman: Miss K. R. Bennett, F.L.A.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. E. Cave, F.L.A.

Committee: Miss M. J. Budden.

Miss M. T. Dunne.

Miss K. M. Mills.

Miss J. G. Rackham.

Miss E. Robins, F.L.A.

Mr. G. E. White.

Hon. Treasurer: Miss G. E. Mollet.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. H. V. Bonny, F.L.A. (Central Library, Southampton).

West Midlands.—A lively discussion on "Problems common to University, County and Urban Libraries" was opened by Mr. E. P. Pritchard, F.L.A., Librarian of the Extra-mural Department of Birmingham University, at a joint meeting of the Birmingham and District Branch and the Midland Division of the A.A.L. Section, held at the University, on Wednesday, 9th January. Mr. Pritchard defined the long term common problems as falling under the three heads of books, staff and money. On the question of book supply, he asked whether adequate standards of book supply for various kinds of libraries could be laid down. Committees, in many instances, failed to realize the

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need of trained staff and needed to be educated accordingly. Financial provision was manifestly inadequate in many areas, and the measure of central control, which would necessarily accompany government assistance, might well be on the lines of that exercised in the case of education. Other problems which Mr. Pritchard thought should be investigated were the possible extension of co-operation to the standardization of equipment and centralized cataloguing and classification. Book losses presented a further problem of some gravity.

Dr. W. Bonser, F.L.A., Librarian of the University Library, spoke of the need for more books and the special need of University libraries for an adequate supply of periodicals. Miss K. R. Birch, Chief Assistant, Worcestershire County Library, stressed the need of county libraries for better accommodation and noted the failure to include library provision in plans for community centres. She agreed that county library losses were high. Mr. G. L. Burton, A.L.A., Librarian of the Central Lending Library, Birmingham, spoke of the replacement difficulty and the tendency of some libraries to regard inter-library lending as an excuse for not buying. He thought staff training showed a tendency to become too academic. Losses were serious and he wondered whether a return to closed libraries with possibly conducted tours of the shelves by borrowers accompanied by staff might not prove necessary.

The President of the Library Association, Mr. H. M. Cashmore, F.L.A. (City Librarian, Birmingham), spoke from the Chair against the laying down of fixed sizes for any types of library. There were great advantages in large size, as experience in Birmingham had demonstrated again and again. On the question of losses he said that the Birmingham Public Libraries Committee had engaged a private detective who had secured many convictions in the Courts against persons taking extra books from the libraries without having them charged.

Several other speakers took part in the discussion and the meeting ended with votes of thanks to Mr. Pritchard for opening the discussion, and the University authorities for providing accommodation for the meeting.

Wisdom of the East

B. I. Palmer

TWO more books * have arrived with the distinctive Saraswati imprint of the Madras Library Association. The first is a new edition of the 1934 *Classified catalogue code*, now out of print, and contains the later thoughts of the former University Librarian of Madras after a further ten years of work. He is confirmed in his view of the superiority of the classified over the dictionary catalogue. The second of these volumes is an attempt to provide himself with a good standard dictionary code with which to compare his own choice of catalogue.

The format and general contents of the two volumes are so alike that one feels that they are substantially the same work. So indeed they are: for what is a classified catalogue but a dictionary catalogue with its subject entries removed for systematic arrangement elsewhere? The main entry is the same in either case, except that in the classified catalogue the class number leads, while in the dictionary catalogue the author takes pride of place. This is the fundamental difference. In reading the second of these books one is struck by the considerable amount of repetition from the first, and cannot help feeling that they might have been better combined in one

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volume, with the divergent practices of the two kinds of catalogue set out. However, Ranganathan deliberately chose the form of two separate works in order to provide a dictionary code of equal standard to his classified code, and some measure of repetition is unavoidable.

Each work begins with a chapter on the parts of the catalogue, and the style of the volumes is set by these first chapters. These books are not the dry-as-dust code one might be led to expect, but are infused with Ranganathan's philosophy of librarianship and life. They contrast oddly with the A.A. Code's terse statement of rules, and are a development of Cutter's "Rules," with its occasional friendly little comments. Indeed the philosophic content bids fair at times to engulf the code.

Style of handwriting for cataloguers has several pages to itself, and I am very sorry to note that the recommended "library hand" should prove such an incongruous mixture of script and cursive handwriting. The style given in Brown's *Manual of library economy* is far clearer; but why not type the entries?

We read on through "transliteration," "articles and contractions," "arrangement of entries," "definitions" and "types of work," till (having disposed of all preliminaries) we get to the task of cataloguing books. Here I have a disagreement with the author. As my bibliothecal *guru* he taught me to look for the sharpest characteristic with which to make a classification. Now, the act of arranging the chapters of a book is classification (Ranganathan's method of numbering his chapters underlines this), and yet he chooses such an unessential characteristic as the number of volumes by which to make his fundamental first division! Homer, it seems, has nodded.

It is obviously impossible for me to go through the whole work rule by rule, comparing it with existing codes (though I suggest that such an exercise might do a lot of good to students of cataloguing), but I will sample it here and there.

Take the vexed question of societies and institutions, which demand 28 headings in the A.A. Code. The rule given here is to enter under the name of the society or institute, additional information being provided for as sub-headings, to assist in individualizing. This means, of course, that we will get endless entries under "Chamber of Commerce" sub-divided geographically.

Let us look now at title entry. Here the rule is: "the first word of the title . . . is to be used as the heading, and to this is to be added the descriptive words "First word." In a recent letter to me the author tells me that he intends to drop this rule from future editions of his codes: I fail to see why he ever began to use it, unless from a mistaken sense of the words of the A.A. Code. "Enter anonymous works under the name of the author when known, otherwise under the first word of the title not an article."

Throughout the works the greatest attention is paid to detail as to setting out, punctuation, etc., and the reason for this is to be found in this quotation from a recent letter of Ranganathan's to me:—

"With reference to autonomy, the issue was raised in the class, why so much rigidity has come into the *catalogue codes*—not only with reference to choice of headings, but even w.r.t. the rendering and the style of writing and the place of writing everything in the entries down to punctuation marks, while the book on classification leaves several things to be done by the classifier on his own initiative, even to the point of giving him freedom to fix new foci and to sharpen existing foci in facets.

This made me dive deep into the matter. Here are the findings that I shared with the class. Please say if there is real substance in these findings.

The Library Assistant

In classification, as it has been laid out in the Colon Classification, we have to express in an artificial language whose distinguishing feature is that it has no synonymous terms. There is one and only one correct term or translation for a particular idea. The facet-formulae which are fixed, the devices which will yield the same result whoever handles them and the unscheduled mnemonics which also are likely to yield the same results to all properly attained classifiers, ensure that the class-number arrived at will be the same whoever works towards it.

It is like a party ascending a hill to reach its highest peak. No matter from what side of the hill or by what path it is pursued, there is the certitude that each member of the party will arrive at the highest peak; and the greater the autonomy they had, the greater will be the thrill not only of individual effort but also that of exchanging notes of individual efforts when they all meet at the destination.

But cataloguing is like the reverse process of climbing down from the top of the hill. Unless all the members of the party rigidly keep to the prescribed path and the path itself is unequivocally laid out, the party will find itself scattered on all sides of the hill—even at diametrically opposite points—when they reach the plains”

If I have seemed rather hard in my criticism of these two works it is because I believe Ranganathan's position in our professional world to be a secure one. He can take the knocks, and I have given the lead to those readers of the *Assistant* who are willing to give them. Get hold of copies of these two books somehow, and learn something of cataloguing from a refreshingly new angle.

* Ranganathan, S. R. : *Classified catalogue code*, 1945; and *Dictionary catalogue code*, 1945. Madras Library Association.

Correspondence

Central Public Library,
Swansea.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Sir,—

I was indeed surprised, on reading the letter in the current issue of *The Library Assistant*, to learn that such adverse criticism had been levelled at the Belfast City Libraries.

During the two years when I constantly made use of the Central Library (while in the Forces), I found the service and bookstock well above the average, and it was through the help and guidance given me by several members of the staff that I was able to pass two of the Library Association examinations.

Although most of my work was done in the Reference Department, I had occasion to use the Lending Library quite frequently, and I had no trouble whatsoever in finding such books as I required. I was greatly taken up with the simplicity of the use of Dewey—adhering to the three figure minimum in conjunction with a running number for collections of books dealing with the same subject, and for a war-time stock housed in a building which had suffered during the blitz, I think the books were in excellent condition and indeed very well arranged.

Yours, etc.,
G. W. DAVIES,
(Chief Assistant).

The Library Assistant

Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

Fiftieth Annual Report

Year ending 31st December, 1945

The year ending 31st December, 1945, marked an important landmark in the life of the Association of Assistant Librarians; on 4th July the Association celebrated its fiftieth anniversary by holding a Jubilee Meeting, combined with the first Annual Meeting since the war, at Chaucer House, and the speakers included Mr. W. Benson Thorne, Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, Mr. Gurner P. Jones, and the President, Mr. J. T. Gillett. The meeting did more than show that the A.A.L. had successfully overcome the difficult period of the second world war; it showed, as the President said to the younger assistants at the close of his address, that the A.A.L. will continue to be an Association whose retention as a section of the Library Association is worth fighting for.

Membership.—The membership at 31st December was 3,277, an increase of 221 over the figure for the previous year, due largely to the number of members reinstated on payment of arrears of subscription. The membership is distributed as follows :—

	Full L.A.	Transitional	Total
Honorary Fellows	20	—	20
Central Association	281	—	281
Divisions :			
Devon and Cornwall	78	—	78
Eastern	62	—	62
East Midlands	250	—	250
Greater London	764	11	775
Kent	141	—	141
Midland	359	—	359
North-Eastern	212	22	234
North-Western :			
Bolton and District	227	5	232
Liverpool and District	190	6	196
South-Eastern	58	1	59
South Wales	124	—	124
Wessex	125	1	126
Yorkshire	314	26	340
	<hr/> 3,205	<hr/> 72	<hr/> 3,277

Finance.—The balance shown this year is large, because the amount of £200 allowed for printing the new edition of *Primer of classification* was not spent in the 1945 financial year owing to printing delays. There is also an outstanding bill for £70 for printing and distributing the November-December issue of *The Library Assistant*. The balance shown in the financial statement is thus reduced by £270 to £300, which is £25 less than

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last year's balance. No refund of capitation grant to the Library Association is made this year.

The Correspondence Courses balance of £40 1s. 7d. is much smaller than usual (1944—£116 7s. 0d.). This is due entirely to the larger number of Correspondence Courses taken by Service members, the balance of whose fees is paid by the Library Association. This balance (£143 15s. 0d.), which has not yet been paid, is much larger than last year's figure (£46). The real balance is thus £137.

Benevolent Fund.—No grants were made in 1945. If this means that there was no real need for a grant among the members during the year, the Council is naturally pleased, but it is most anxious that the existence of the Fund should not be forgotten, and that the Fund should be used for the purposes for which it was founded. Divisional Committees and individual members are again reminded that they should notify the Council at once of any necessitous cases.

Education.—600 students took the ordinary Correspondence Courses during the year, an increase of 39 on the previous year; 111 of these courses were supplied to Forces members, an increase of 66. Revision courses numbered 101, an increase of 27, and of these, 11, 6 more than in 1944, went to Forces members.

The Education Committee were mostly engaged during 1945 on the reorganization of the programme of Courses to fit the new Syllabus. New tutors in most sections have been appointed, subject to favourable reports of the Courses from the respective Section Editors, to commence their duties in 1946.

Mr. G. R. Micklewright, tutor in classification, resigned during the year. The Council is glad to have this opportunity of expressing its thanks to all those who have undertaken the arduous work of tutors during the year; and special mention must be made of Mrs. S. W. Martin's invaluable work in the office of Hon. Education Secretary to the Council.

Library.—There was an appreciable increase in the use made of the Association's Library during the year. Borrowers numbered 222 and issues rose to 3,386, an increase of nearly 30 per cent. over the previous year. Additions to stock during the year were 35 volumes, of which 29 were purchased and 6 donated.

The Council again records its gratitude to Mr. L. J. Packington, Chief Librarian of Lambeth, for continuing to accommodate the collection at the Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24, and to Miss B. F. Nevard, who has continued in office as Hon. Librarian.

Divisions.—It is gratifying to record that all Divisions have maintained, and most have increased, their membership during the year. All Divisions have held at least one meeting, and the more active have carried out full programmes in spite of the continued difficulties of war-time conditions. The feature "Divisional Notes and News" in *The Library Assistant* has reported many of these, and though limitation of space prohibits more than a brief mention here of what the Divisions have been doing, full Divisional Reports may be obtained from Divisional Secretaries.

During the year Mr. John Hadfield, Director of the National Book League, has addressed four of the Divisions on the work of the League, and other outstanding topics include Miss E. J. Carnell, speaking on Libraries in New Zealand; the Tutors Brains Trust; Professional education; Federal libraries in the United States; and Libraries in the educational function of society. Rambles and visits to printing works

'The Library Assistant

and other places of interest have been held, and the Wessex Division celebrated its 21st anniversary by holding a joint meeting with the South-Eastern Division, at which the speakers included Mr. P. S. J. Welsford, Secretary of the Library Association. Some Divisions have continued educational activities, and the *Wessex Newsletter* has appeared quarterly.

The Council is grateful to Divisional Officers and Committee members, and to all who have contributed to the success of the activities held.

Publications.—Most of the A.A.L. publications became out of print during the year. The new edition of Phillips' *Primer of classification* will be available early in 1946, and though good progress has been made with the revision of *Sequel stories* a publication date cannot be given.

Officers and Council.—Five meetings of the Council were held during the year, and in addition to the necessary routine work, special attention was paid to the Library Association's new Syllabus of education and training. Divisional areas also received considerable attention, and a Sub-Committee has been appointed to consider the whole question and present its report to the Council.

Newcomers as nationally elected members of the Council were Miss Lynes, Mr. Munford and Miss Wright. The Council wishes to take this opportunity of recording its warm appreciation of the work on behalf of the Association undertaken by Miss E. M. Exley, Honorary Secretary since 1941, and Miss M. I. Pitts, Honorary Membership Secretary, both of whom resigned office at the end of the year.

The Future.—The hope expressed in last year's Annual Report that the end of the war would not be far distant was happily fulfilled, and already a considerable number of our members have been demobilized and are again taking an active part in the work of the Association. By the end of 1946 the majority of our Service members will have been demobilized; their outlook broadened by the experiences of the war years, they will, it is confidently expected, infuse new life into our Association. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the A.A.L. is an organization for young librarians, and its future must of necessity now be guided largely by a new generation of men and women who are too young to have taken an active part in its work during the great period of its independence prior to 1929. To what extent will this new generation continue to provide that independence of outlook on professional matters which the older generation brought so successfully into the parent association when we amalgamated in 1929? In the answer to that question lies the key to the future of the A.A.L. Who can doubt that these men and women, who have been through the fire of war, will rise to their responsibilities, and will from now on begin to write a new chapter in the history of our Association, the fiftieth anniversary of which was so successfully celebrated during the year?

We remember at this time many of our colleagues who will not come back. We honour them for the sacrifice they have made, and mourn them personally and for the loss of all that they might have contributed towards the development of our profession.

On behalf of the Council,

J. T. GILLET, *President*.

E. CAVE, *Hon. Secretary*.

Central Library,
Southampton.

Statement of Income

		<i>Income</i>		GENERAL	
		£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To	Balance brought forward from 1944			325	0 0
"	Subscriptions	15	15 0		
"	Capitation Grant	764	7 0		
"	Sales : <i>The Library Assistant</i>	34	7 3		
"	A.A.L. Publications	37	18 3		
"	Advertisements	51	0 10		
"	Miscellaneous	1	13 0		
				905	1 4

£1,230 1 4

		<i>Income</i>		CORRESPONDENCE	
		£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To	Balance brought forward from 1944	116	7 0		
"	Students' Fees	906	19 0		
"	Balance of fees paid by L.A. for members in Forces	46	0 0		
"	Refund of Fees by Tutors	4	3 0		

£1,073 9 0

		<i>Income</i>		BENEVOLENT	
		£	s. d.	£	s. d.
To	Balance brought forward from 1944	367	11 3½		
"	Interest on Post Office Savings Bank Account	0	17 11		
"	Appreciation in value of National Savings Certificates, 1st January to 31st December, 1945	11	15 7		
		£380	4 9½		

STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

		<i>Assets</i>			
		£	s. d.		
To	National Savings Certificates : Value at 31st December, 1945	343	9 0½		
"	Post Office Savings Bank	36	15 9		
		£380	4 9½		

All the above statements audited and found correct :

(Signed) E. N. BROWN }
G. E. SMITH } *Honorary Auditors.*

me and Expenditure, 1945

ACCOUNT

	<i>Expenditure</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Printing <i>The Library Assistant</i>		333	13	1			
" Distributing <i>The Library Assistant</i>		37	13	2			
" Payments to Divisions		37	10	0			
" Councillors' Expenses		125	10	2			
" Library		25	9	6			
" Stationery and Printing		9	6	10			
" Postages		11	10	0			
" Clerical Assistance for Honorary Officers		49	8	0			
" Prisoner-of-War Parcels		16	5	0			
" <i>Primer of classification</i>		2	0	0			
" Miscellaneous		8	9	0			
					656	14	9
Balance carried forward to 1946					573	6	7
					<u>£1,230</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>

COURSES ACCOUNT

	<i>Expenditure</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Tutors' Fees		947	5	0			
" Refund of Course Fee		6	13	6			
" Stationery and Printing		11	9	11			
" Honorary Education Secretary: Clerical Assistance and Expenses		35	19	0			
" Postages		20	0	0			
" Insurances		0	10	0			
" Course Editors' Fees		7	7	0			
" Miscellaneous		4	3	0			
					1,033	7	5
Balance carried forward to 1946					40	1	7
					<u>£1,073</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>

FUND ACCOUNT

	<i>Expenditure</i>	£	s.	d.
By Balance carried forward to 1946		380	4	9½
		<u>£380</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9½</u>

AS ON 31st DECEMBER, 1945

	<i>Liabilities</i>	£	s.	d.
By Balance of Fund, 31st December, 1945		380	4	9½
		<u>£380</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9½</u>

ERNEST WISKER, *Hon. Treasurer.*

THE OFFICERS OF THE A.A.L.

PRESIDENT: J. T. GILLETT, F.L.A. (Willesden).

VICE-PRESIDENT: A. LI. CARVER, A.L.A. (Portsmouth).

HONORARY SECRETARY: E. CAVE, F.L.A. (Central Library, Southampton).

HONORARY TREASURER: E. WISKER, F.L.A. (Public Library, Gillingham, Kent).

HONORARY EDITOR (Acting): S. C. HOLLIDAY, F.L.A. (Central Library, Hackney, London, E.8).

HONORARY SOLICITORS: Messrs. METCALFE, COPEMAN & PETTEFAR,
3 and 4 Clement's Inn, London, W.C.2.

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL: *Hon. Education Secretary:* Mrs. S. W. MARTIN, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24. *Hon. Librarian:* Miss B. F. NEVARD, F.L.A., Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24. *Hon. Membership Secretary:* Miss W. M. HEARD, A.L.A., Chiswick Public Library, W.4.

Matters relating to Correspondence Course and A.A.L. publications to the Hon. Education Secretary. Orders for THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, advertisements, etc., to the Hon. Treasurer. Enquiries relating to membership and delivery of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT to the Hon. Membership Secretary. All other enquiries to the Hon. Secretary.

A.A.L. PUBLICATIONS

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

10s. 6d. per annum, post free.

PHILLIPS: PRIMER OF BOOK CLASSIFICATION. New and enlarged edition, 1946.
7s. (6s. to members) post free.

SAYERS: LIBRARY COMMITTEE, 2nd edition,
1935. 7d. post free.

Obtainable from S. W. MARTIN, A.L.A., Carnegie
Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24.
